

# Kotzebue Service Unit

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## OVERVIEW

### Alaska Native 1998 User Population.

<b>KOTZEBUE SERVICE UNIT</b>	<b>7,193</b>
Maniilaq Association	7,193

*Users are defined as beneficiaries who used a facility that reports through the IHS data system at least once between 10/1/95 and 9/30/98.*

**Environmental Factors.** The Kotzebue Service Unit straddles the Arctic Circle in northwestern Alaska and covers about 36,138 square miles. The Native population inhabits eleven communities of the Northwest Arctic Borough and the village of Point Hope. Residents of the area are primarily of Inupiaq (Eskimo) heritage. River communities in the region often sit in wooded areas, where game and fishing are abundant. About 40 percent of the present user population live in the City of Kotzebue.



Kotzebue is 26 miles above the Arctic Circle on the northwestern shore of the Baldwin Peninsula. While Kotzebue itself is quite flat and densely populated, it enjoys vistas of snow-capped mountains and vast expanses of tundra. The city is nearly surrounded by the waters of Kotzebue Sound, Kobuk Lake, and several lagoons.

During the summer months, the temperature averages between 40 and 60 degrees F°, with an all-time high of 85 degrees. A light breeze from Kotzebue Sound keeps summer

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temperatures comfortable. This is the Land of the Midnight Sun, and residents enjoy the longer daylight for about 36 days when the summer sun does not set.

While winter temperatures average between 15 and 20 degrees below zero F°, the very dry climate moderates the impact of the temperature. The lowest temperature recorded was 58 degrees below zero. Brisk winds drive the windchill to below -50 degrees F°, but residents compensate by dressing appropriately for the weather. The average annual precipitation is about nine inches, including 40 inches of snow.

**Utilities.** Electricity, water and sanitation facilities are available in most villages in the Kotzebue Service Unit. These utilities lack good backup systems, however, and power outages are not uncommon. In some villages, homes still lack water/sewer facilities.

**Communications.** There is a local telephone company serving the Kotzebue Service Unit, and a choice of long distance carriers via satellite. It is estimated that about 90-98% of homes in the City of Kotzebue, and most of the homes in the villages are equipped with telephones. The village health aides currently do not have the capacity to access patient records at the Maniilaq Hospital electronically. It is planned that the health aides will eventually be connected to a hospital network with a voice over data system and “store and forward” telemedicine. Maniilaq Medical Center plans to have a connection to ANMC that supports “live” telemedicine and the ability to access and augment patient records electronically. All villages have daily mail service and most have access to cable TV.

**Transportation.** Kotzebue is a regional center for air transportation. Travelers into or out of the area make connections through Kotzebue. Jet passenger service arrives daily from Anchorage. Bush planes provide both scheduled and charter service to the villages as the weather permits. The villages surrounding Kotzebue depend on bush flights for much of their food and other essentials.

No interconnecting roadways exist between Kotzebue and the villages. Transportation is typically by air, although boats and snowmobiles also provide access. Many residents own dog teams for recreational use and racing. During the winter months, the frozen inlets and rivers provide natural highways for travel to villages by dog sled or snowmobile. After the ice breaks up in the summer months, the waterways carry motorboats to and from Kotzebue.

**Housing.** Approximately 75 units of employee housing are available for Maniilaq Health Center staff. Eligibility for employee housing is based on job duties and call status. Maniilaq Association, the tribal organization that manages the Kotzebue Service Unit under P.L. 93-638, assists employees who prefer to live in the community to locate suitable housing. Rental or private housing is available but is very limited in Kotzebue and the outlying villages.

**Recreation.** Kotzebue’s long winter season encourages a variety of winter activities, including dog mushing, sledding, cross-country skiing, snowmachining, hunting and fishing. Though the summer season is short, the long days are filled with camping, fishing, rafting, gardening, berrypicking, hiking, boating, softball, hunting, picnicking, and other summer

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activities. Eskimo dancing and singing is a favorite activity in Kotzebue. City league sports such as basketball and volleyball are preferred indoor activities during the winter.

Kotzebue has a teen center, Senior Citizens Cultural Center, hotel, library, bank, museum, hairstylist, supermarkets, five restaurants, hardware, variety and video stores, snowmachine and auto shops, and several convenience stores. The Catholic, Baptist, Friends, Mormon, Church of God, Seventh Day Adventist, and Episcopal are the established churches in Kotzebue.

**Education.** Educational programs are available in Kotzebue and the surrounding villages. The Northwest Arctic Borough School District provides public education from preschool through grade twelve. For working parents, Kotzebue has a private daycare center called Children's House. The Chukchi Community Campus of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, is in Kotzebue. A wide range of courses is available on-site and through a statewide audioconference network. Finally, the Alaska Technical Center equips postsecondary students with needed vocational/technical skills for the region.

**Natural Resources.** The Northwest Arctic Borough encompasses a large area essentially unaffected by human development. Most of the lands within the area are managed by the National Park Services, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Alaska. The major private land owners include the Northwest Arctic Native Association (NANA) and the Kikiktagruk Inupiat Corporation (KIC).

Various species of plants, animals, birds, and fish live in the region. Caribou, moose, wolves, musk oxen, bowhead whales, polar bears, foxes, ptarmigan, bearded and spotted seals are just a handful of the wild life in this area. Shellfish, Arctic char, pike, grayling and chum salmon are several species of fish that are harvested there. Waterfowl, shorebirds and other species that live in open flat areas are prevalent during the spring and summer months.

Supplementing the cash economy is the traditional subsistence economy. Residents enjoy and rely on harvesting natural foods and depend upon the fish, game, berries and other natural foods for nutrition.

**Economic Conditions.** Major employers include the school district, Maniilaq Association, the City of Kotzebue, the community college and other public agencies and governmental organizations. The NANA Regional Corporation, Kotzebue's profit corporation (KIC) and a

## Northwest Arctic Borough

Median Age (1997)	23
Persons per household (1997)	3.75
Children under 5 years old	11.5%
School age population (5-17)	32.2%
Adult workforce population (18-64)	51.2%
Seniors (65 years and over)	5.1%
Native American	87.1%
White	11.7%
African American	0.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.1%
Hispanic	1.6%
All 16 years plus in labor force (1997)	54.5%
Unemployed (annual average)	16.1%
Per capita income (1996)	18,392
Wage and salary employment (annual average 1997)	38,515
High school graduate or higher	63.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	11.9%

SOURCE: State of Alaska, Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section, Alaska Economic Trends, January 1999, p4.

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number of small retail, utility and service businesses also provide employment. When fully operational, the NANA-Cominco Red Dog Mine northwest of Kotzebue requires about four hundred employees to produce lead and zinc for the world market.

Seasonal employment includes construction, commercial fishing, and tourism. Construction is one of the main sources of income for the area, and most contracts are with the Federal government.

**Tribes.** All Federally recognized tribes for the Kotzebue area are listed under the tribal health organization.

## **Maniilaq Association Region**

Native Village of Ambler - P.O. Box 47, Ambler, AK 99786  
Native Village of Buckland IRA - P.O. Box 63, Buckland, AK 99727  
Native Village of Deering IRA - P.O. Box 89, Deering, AK 99736  
Native Village of Kiana - P.O. Box 69, Kiana, AK 99749  
Native Village of Kivalina IRA - P.O. Box 50051, Kivalina, AK 99750  
Native Village of Kobuk - General Delivery, Kobuk, AK 99751  
Native Village of Kotzebue IRA - P.O. Box 296, Kotzebue, AK 99752  
Native Village of Noatak IRA - P.O. Box 89, Noatak, AK 99761  
Noorvik Native Community IRA - P.O. Box 71, Noorvik, AK 99763  
Native Village of Point Hope IRA - P.O. Box 109, Point Hope, AK 99766  
Native Village of Selawik IRA - P.O. Box 59, Selawik, AK 99770  
Native Village of Shungnak IRA - P.O. Box 63, Shungnak, AK 99773

## **DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH-CARE DELIVERY SYSTEM**

The Maniilaq Association's roots are deep. They stretch back to the earliest efforts to win social justice and self-determination for the NANA Region's Inupiaq people. Launched in 1966, the organization was initially the Northwest Alaska Native Association. After passage of the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act, the regional nonprofit organization called Mauneluk Association organized in 1972. In early 1975, the Kotzebue Area Health Corporation and Mauneluk merged as a single health delivery organization for the NANA Region.

In 1981, the corporation adopted the true Inupiaq spelling of Mauneluk and became Maniilaq Association. The name has dual significance. First, Maniilaq was an Inupiaq prophet who traveled and taught throughout the region in the not-so-distant days before the first contact with the European world. His prediction that a race of people from the south would come into the land and bring great changes has come true. Maniilaq, in the Inupiaq language, also suggests "no money," reflecting the organization's nonprofit status.

During the past two decades, Maniilaq has assumed management responsibility of nearly all regional service programs which the state and federal government operated previously.

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On July 1, 1988, the Maniilaq Association assumed responsibility for hospital care in the region under a P.L. 93-638 contract. Today, the organization provides virtually all of the health and social services available in the region. The Indian Health Service funds both hospital and community health services. A variety of state- and other-funded programs complement these services.

Maniilaq Association health services are based out of the recently completed Maniilaq Health Center facility. The 80,000 square-foot state of the art primary health care center was dedicated in February 1995, and opened for services in March 1995. Maniilaq Health Center medical services include acute inpatient (17 beds) and outpatient care, twenty-four hour emergency services and specialty clinic support. Ancillary services include physical therapy, respiratory therapy, laboratory, radiology, pharmacy, social services, and dietary. Community health programs provided from the center include dental, environmental health, health education, eye care, maternal child health, emergency medical services training, injury prevention, Women Infant Children (WIC), audiology and public health nursing services. Social Services, including mental and behavioral health services are based at F.R. Ferguson Building in Kotzebue. Village-based health services are provided in health clinics located in each of the 11 outlying communities. The Association also provides assisted living, prematernal home and traditional health care services at the Kotzebue Senior Citizens Cultural Center facility.

Maniilaq Association is committed to providing quality patient care, and the Maniilaq Health Center services are fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).

Community health practitioners (CHPs) serve as counterparts for physicians in all of the villages. They provide clinic services and maintain daily telephone contact with physicians in Kotzebue. They also make arrangements and assist itinerant health services providers in the villages. The CHPs and village clinic system ensure an important continuing provider presence in the villages.

## **Name and Location of Hospitals/Clinics/Health Centers.**

Maniilaq Health Center, P.O. Box 43, Kotzebue, Alaska 99752

Maniilaq operates community health aides programs in the following village built health clinics. The Point Hope community health aide program is operated by the Arctic Slope Native Association.

Ambler  
Buckland  
Deering

Kiana  
Kivalina  
Kobuk

Noatak  
Noorvik  
Sealwik

Shungnak

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## NON-TRIBAL HEALTH AGENCIES AND FACILITIES AND TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED TO SERVICE POPULATION

Maniilaq provides health care to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries residing in Kotzebue and 11 outlying villages.

Public health nurses serve the area under the auspices of the State of Alaska.

Other resources include the State of Alaska Health & Social Services Department of Family and Youth Service, the Public Assistance Division and the Division of Social Services.

## HEALTH STATUS OF ALASKA NATIVES LIVING IN THE KOTZEBUE SERVICE UNIT

**Mortality.** The following table shows the Kotzebue Native deaths by age and the leading causes of Native mortality.

**Kotzebue Service Unit**  
**Alaska Native Deaths by Age and**  
**Three-Year Average Crude Death Rates per 100,000 Population**

	1996	1997	1998	3 -Year Rate
Total Deaths	47	29	33	534.4
Age at Death:				
under 5	4	2	2	
5-9	1	1	0	
10-14	0	0	0	
15-24	4	5	3	
25-44	12	6	6	
45-64	9	6	8	
65+	17	9	14	
Age Unknown	0	0	0	

Leading Causes of Death	1994-1996 /4		1995-1997 /4		1996-1998 /4	
	AI/AN	U.S.	AI/AN	U.S.	AI/AN	U.S.
1) Malignant Neoplasms /2	116.3	204.9	79.2	203.4	112.8	200.3
Lung Cancer	35.4	57.5	24.7	57.3	24.5	59.1
2) Heart Disease	116.3	280.7	98.9	276.4	98.1	268.2
3) Unintentional Injuries (Accidents) /1	101.1	35.5	84.1	35.8	73.5	36.2
Water Transport/Drowning	35.4	1.7	29.7	1.6	29.4	1.6
4) Suicide	91	11.9	74.2	11.6	68.6	11.3
5) Alcohol Related /3	25.3	7.7	29.7	7.5	34.3	7.4
6) Chronic Obst. Pul. Diseases	20.2	39.2	14.8	40.0	24.5	41.7

1/ Does not include injuries purposefully inflicted or injuries undetermined whether purposefully or accidentally inflicted. Motor Vehicle and Water Transport/Drowning are also counted in the total Accidents; it does not include alcohol related deaths.

2/ Lung Cancer is included in Malignant Neoplasms.

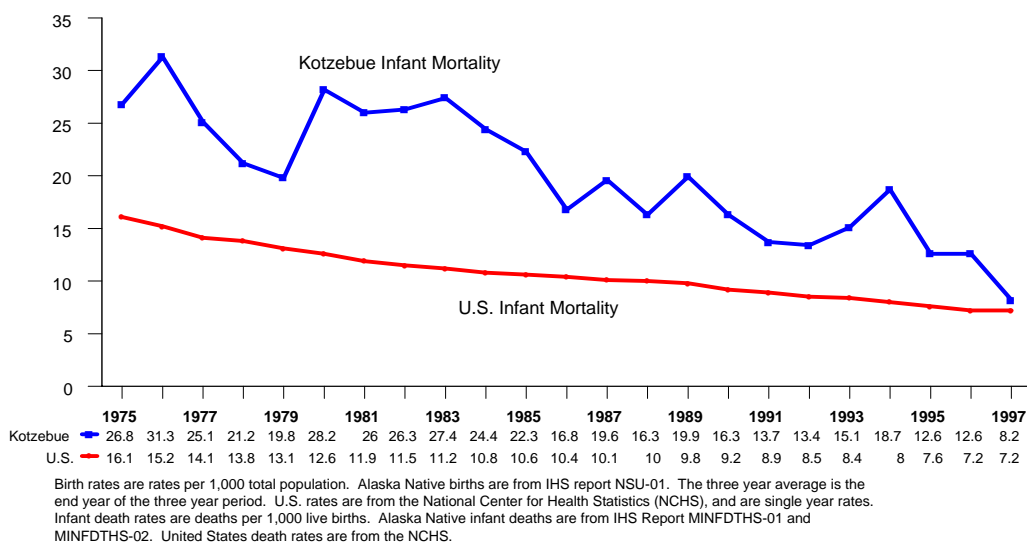
3/ Alcohol Related deaths include alcoholic psychoses, alcohol dependence syndrome, alcohol abuse, alcoholic liver disease and cirrhosis, alcoholic polyneuropathy, alcoholic cardiomyopathy, alcoholic gastritis, excessive blood level of alcohol, and accidental poisoning by alcoholic beverages and ethyl alcohol.

4/ Causes not included when deaths average less than one per year in 1995-97. Single year rates for U.S. Alaska Area Native Health Service, Division of Planning, Evaluation & Health Statistics.

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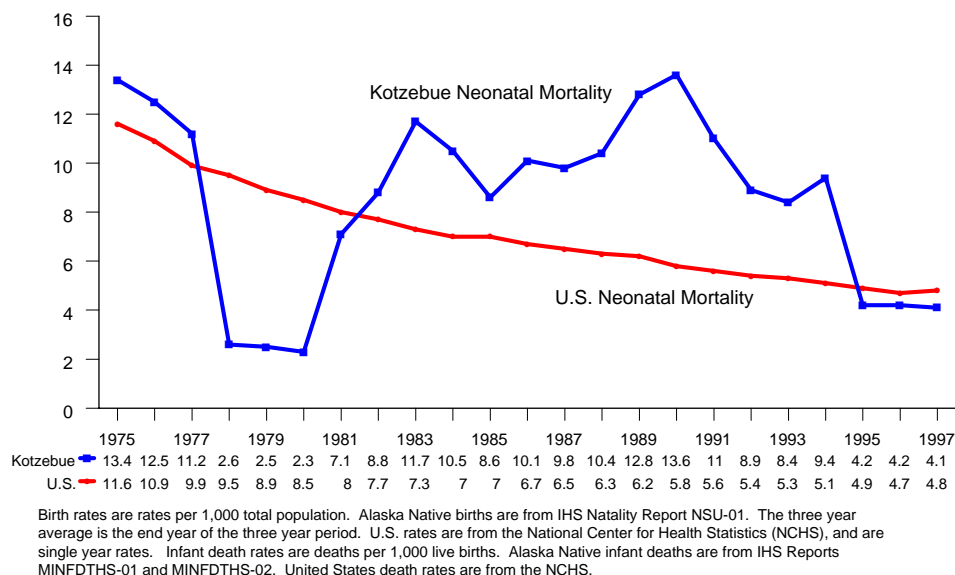
**Infant Mortality Rates.** The latest Native infant mortality rate for the Kotzebue service area is declining.

**Infant Mortality Rates  
Kotzebue Service Area Natives vs. U.S.  
1975 - 1997**



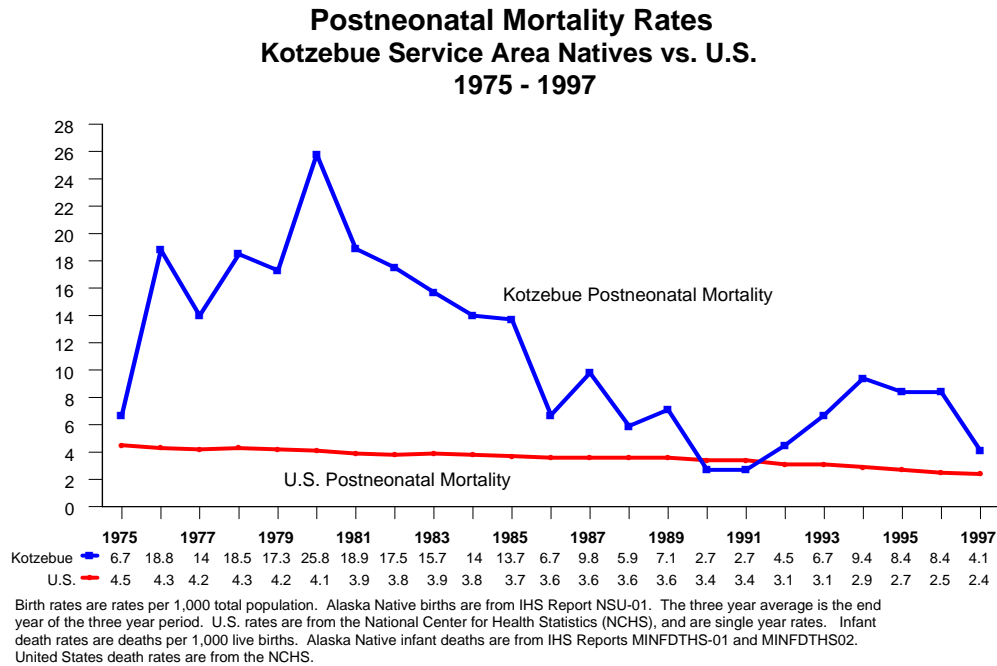
**Neonatal Mortality Rates.** The graph shows the Kotzebue Native neonatal death rates slightly lower than the U.S. rates.

**Neonatal Mortality Rates  
Kotzebue Service Area Natives vs. U.S.  
1975 - 1997**

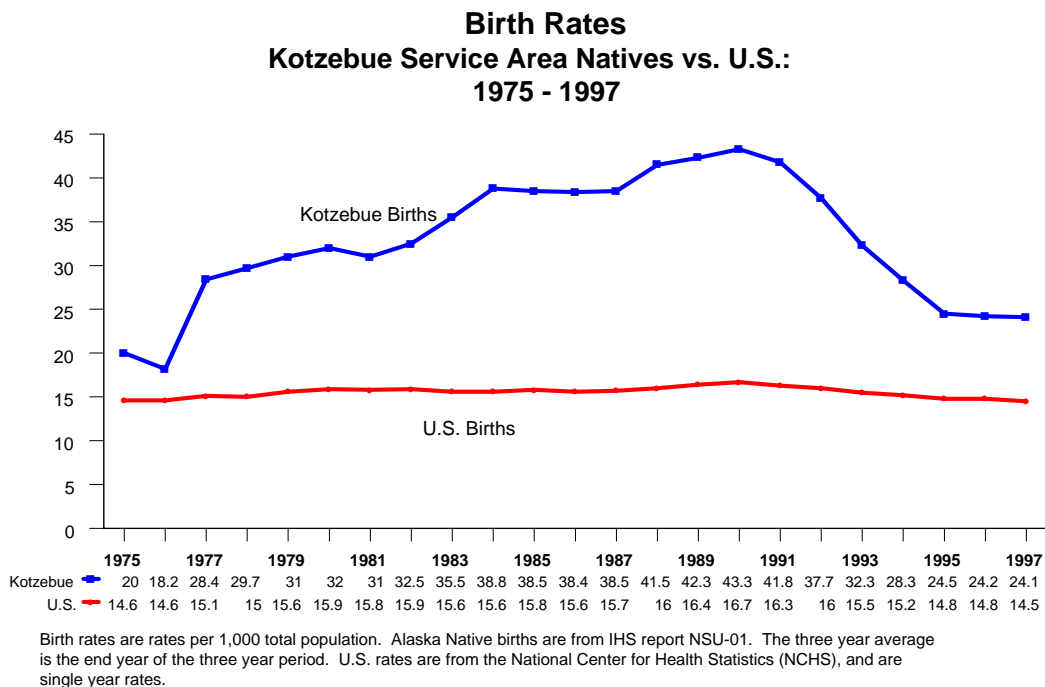


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**Postneonatal Mortality Rates.** This graph shows the Kotzebue Native mortality rates and the U.S. rates.



**Birth Rates.** The graph shows the Kotzebue Native birth rates and the U.S. birth rates.



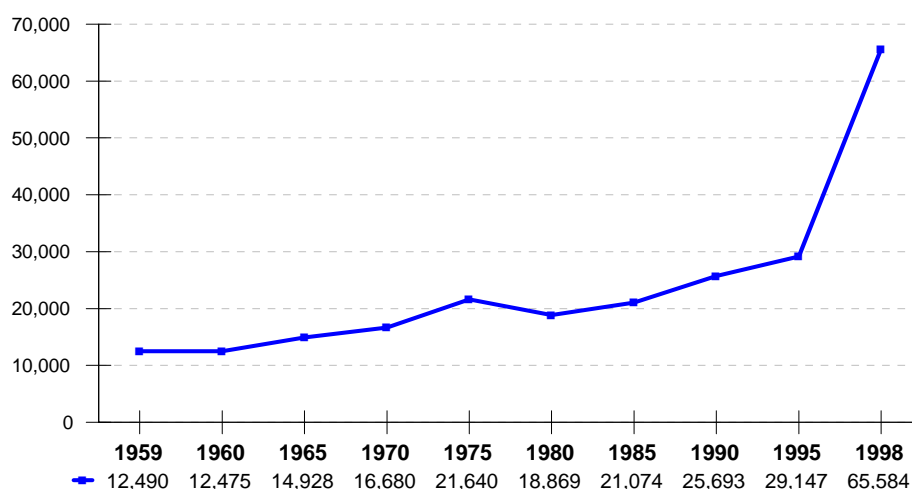


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## OUTPATIENT WORKLOAD/DIAGNOSES

The outpatient workload for the Kotzebue Service Unit is shown for the fiscal years 1959 through 1998.

**Kotzebue Service Unit  
Outpatient Workload  
FY 1959 - FY 1998**



Source: Indian Health Service Inpatient/Outpatient Reporting System in Albuquerque, APC Report 4A

**Kotzebue Service Unit  
Leading Causes of Outpatient Visits: FY 1994 - FY 1997**

All Age Groups	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
Upper Respiratory Problems	2,491	3,128	3,175	5,857
Otitis Media	1,993	2,158	2,234	4,200
Accidents & Injuries	2,086	2,615	2,607	3,615
Hypertension	1,028	1,173	1,314	2,166
Refractive Error	324	869	2,006	2,122
Tests Only	935	1,133	1,445	2,088
Strep Throat	588	380	450	1,880
Hospital Medical/Surgical Follow-up	1,503	1,210	1,428	1,734
Family Planning	759	1,132	1,098	1,700
Neuroses & Non-Psychotic Disorders	793	934	1,055	1,553

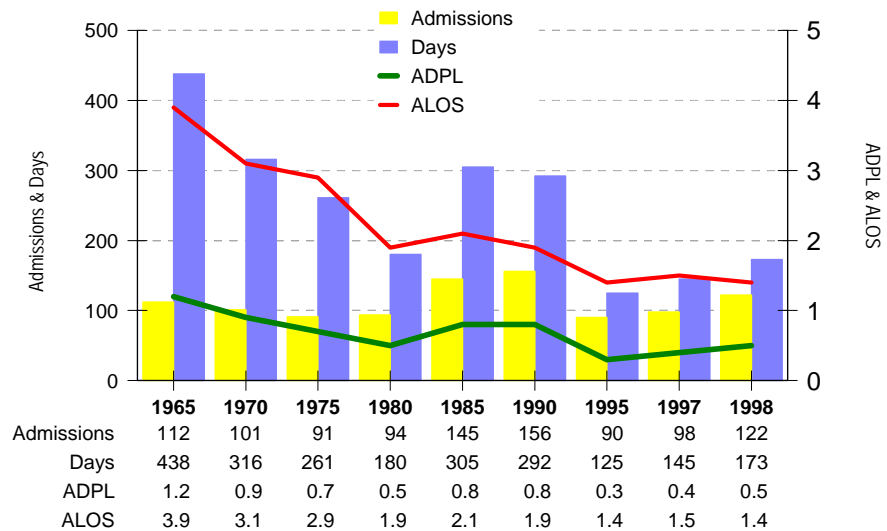
Source: Indian Health Service Inpatient/Outpatient Reporting System, APC Report 1C.

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## INPATIENT WORKLOAD

Maniilaq Health Center's newborn workload is shown in the following graph.

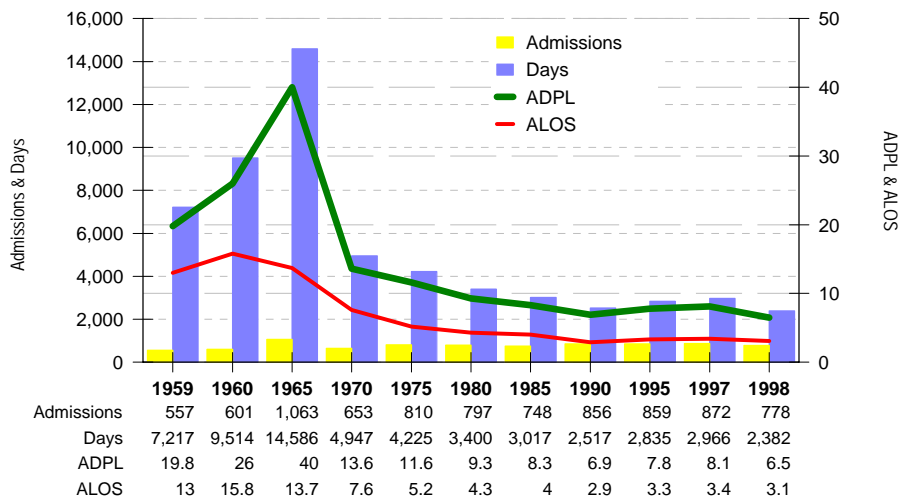
### Maniilaq Health Center Newborn Inpatient Workload FY 1965 - FY 1998



ADPL = Average Daily Patient Load; ALOS = Average Length of Stay  
SOURCE: HSA-202 Monthly Report of Inpatient Services

Maniilaq's inpatient workload excluding newborns is shown in the following graph.

### Maniilaq Health Center Inpatient Workload Excluding Newborns FY 1959 - FY 1998



ADPL = Average Daily Patient Load; ALOS = Average Length of Stay  
SOURCE: HSA-202 Monthly Report of Inpatient Services

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## DISCHARGE DIAGNOSES

### Kotzebue Service Unit Leading Causes of Discharges: FY 1994 - FY 1997

	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
Deliveries (Childbirth)	119	93	107	90
Pneumonia	47	83	108	77
Accidents & Injuries	79	91	77	66
Heart Disease	33	31	58	52
Undiagnosed Symptoms	54	36	39	51
Complications of Pregnancy	51	39	63	50
Neuroses & Personality Disorders	18	36	25	34
Alcohol Abuse	50	76	82	28
Bronchitis, Emphysema	44	26	32	26
Respiratory Allergies	13	12	18	24

Source: Indian Health Service Inpatient/Outpatient Reporting System, APC Report 2C.